

# Commonwealth of Virginia Mail Security Training

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June 28, 2007



**State  
Mail  
Services**

# Agenda

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- ❖ Mail Consolidation Update & New Services
- ❖ Purpose of Mail Security Training
- ❖ Why Mail Centers are Targeted
- ❖ Current Environment
- ❖ Types of Threats
- ❖ Proper Procedure for Responding to Threats
- ❖ Remarks by SGT Robinson, VCP
- ❖ Closing Remarks

# Mail Consolidation Update

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## ***Consolidation stats from October 2006 to March 2007***

- ❖ From 3 to 25 agencies supported by State Mail Services
- ❖ From 114 to 121 mail stops
- ❖ Decreased from 53 to 34 postage meters in use by state agencies in Richmond Metro area
- ❖ Annual savings from reduction in mail meters \$107,628
- ❖ Annual savings from reduction in mail courier services and P.O. Box rentals \$28,428
- ❖ Savings to date from presort activity \$16,226

# SMS New Services

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## ❖ *Presort Study*



## ❖ SMS Collection Boxes



# Presort Study

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- ❖ SMS recently met with senior management from several state agencies to discuss current presort environment
- ❖ A study group was formed to further analyze mail presort options at the Seat of Government
- ❖ On July 10, 2007, the Presort Study Group will start meeting bi-weekly to analyze the following:
  - ☐ Agency mail volumes
  - ☐ Agency mail operations to determine presort support and requirements
  - ☐ Available presort savings
  - ☐ Operational costs and budget requirements

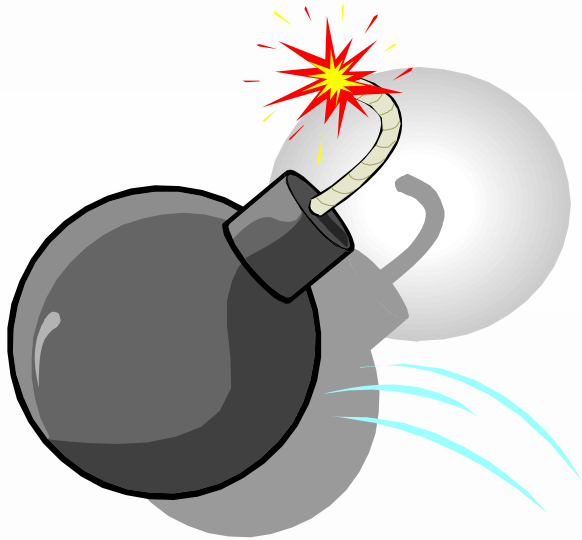
# SMS Collection Boxes

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- ❖ Installing two collection boxes, one in the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Office Building lobby and the other in the Monroe Building lobby
- ❖ SMS customers can drop inter-agency mail
- ❖ SMS customers can also deposit mail that needs metering, but it must have a “Mail Meter Card” attached
- ❖ Last pick-up for both boxes will be 4:45pm

# Mail Security

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# Purpose of Mail Security Training

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To provide state mail center employees and other individuals responsible for handling mail with up-to-date and uniform mail security training. The Mail Security Training is designed to help lower the probability of contaminated or suspicious mail from entering the work environment.



# Why are Mail Centers Targeted?

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The mail center is a vital nerve center of the modern organization- a labor intensive, initial point of contact and handoff for all paper documents received by that organization. Accordingly, problems and delays in the mail center cause a negative ripple effect that becomes increasingly magnified on whatever processes occur downstream.

# The Risks are Real and Current

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- ❖ Florida School Locked Down After White Powder Found in Envelope (10News, 01/24/2007)
- ❖ Arizona State House Evacuated for Suspicious Packages (Capitol Media Services, 01/24/2007)
- ❖ Animal Rights Mail Bombing May Continue in UK (Oxford Mail, 01/23/2007)
- ❖ White Powder Scare at Vancouver City Hall (CBC News, 01/22/2007)
- ❖ Police in Michigan Investigate Powder in Greeting Card (Midland Daily News, 01/22/2007)

# The Risks are Real and Current

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- ❖ Third Letter Bomb to Bioscience Firms Found in UK (Oxford Mail, 01/19/2007)
- ❖ Florida Courthouses Evacuated for Mysterious Powders (Miami Herald, 01/19/2007)
- ❖ California Costco Closed After Suspicious Package Found (NBC4 News, 01/15/2007)
- ❖ Suspicious Package Sent to Clintons Evacuates Post Office (AP, 01/12/2007)

# The Commonwealth's Current Environment

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- ❖ Most agencies depend on USPS, UPS, Fed Ex and other carriers to screen incoming mail
- ❖ USPS currently performs biological screening on stamped mail testing for anthrax related threats
- ❖ Metered mail originating from a known source normally is not screened by USPS
- ❖ Flat mail pieces (envelopes larger than a legal sized envelope) are not screened

# Current Environment

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- ❖ **The Commonwealth's mail procedures are not uniformly documented, implemented or enforced.**
- ❖ **Some agencies will place outgoing mail on the ground near a USPS box.**



# What Constitutes a Suspicious Mail or Package?

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- ❖ Unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you
- ❖ Have excessive postage
- ❖ A fictitious or no return address
- ❖ Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as “Personal” or “To be Opened by Addressee Only”

# What Constitutes a Suspicious Mail or Package?

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- ❖ Poorly typed or handwritten addresses or misspellings of common words
- ❖ Shows a city or state postmark that does not match the return address
- ❖ Of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped
- ❖ Have excessive tape on them
- ❖ Have a strange odor or chemical smell

# What Constitutes a Suspicious Mail or Package?

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- ❖ Powdery substance on or leaking from the package
- ❖ Leaking any type of fluid
- ❖ Protruding wires, screws, or any other noise when moved
- ❖ Any item you consider out of the ordinary for your work area



# Two Most Common Threats

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- ❖ Chemical or Biological Hazards
- ❖ Mail Bombs - Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

# Bio-Chemical Hazardous Material

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**Anthrax is a life-threatening infectious disease that normally affects animals, especially ruminants (such as goats, cattle, sheep, and horses). Anthrax can be transmitted to humans by contact with infected animals or their products or by biological warfare. Anthrax does not spread from person to person. The agent that causes anthrax is a bacterium called *Bacillus anthracis*.**

# Types of Anthrax Infections

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**Anthrax Type:** Cutaneous

**Exposure:** Skin

**Transmittal:** Infection introduced through scratches or abrasions of the skin

**Incubation:** 1 to 12 days

**Infects:** Skin

**Symptoms:** Raised bumps resembling a spider bite, fever, malaise, and headaches

**Treatment:** Antibiotics, tetracycline and erythromycin

# Types of Anthrax Infections

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**Anthrax Type:** Inhalation

**Exposure:** Inhalation

**Transmittal:** By inhalation of the spores

**Incubation:** 1 to 7 days or can extend to 60 days

**Infects:** Lungs (respiratory system)

**Symptoms:** Resembles a viral respiratory illness, sore throat, mild fever, muscle aches, and malaise

**Treatment:** Antibiotics, tetracycline and erythromycin

# Types of Anthrax Infections

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**Anthrax Type:** Gastrointestinal

**Exposure:** Ingestion

**Transmittal:** By consumption of raw or uncooked meats

**Incubation:** 1 to 7 days

**Infects:** Intestinal tract

**Symptoms:** Nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea

**Treatment:** Antibiotics, tetracycline and erythromycin

# **What to do if you Receive a Suspicious Letter or Parcel (Bio-Chemical)**

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- ❖ Do not shake or open the contents of any suspicious package or envelope
- ❖ Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others to examine it
- ❖ Put the package or envelope down on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or at any contents which may have spilled
- ❖ Do not attempt to clean up any spilled contents
- ❖ Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope, leave the area, close any doors, and take actions to prevent others from entering the area

# **What to do if you Receive a Suspicious Letter or Parcel (Bio-Chemical)**

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- Please ensure that all persons who have touched the package or envelope wash their hands, face, and arms with soap and water immediately
- Notify your supervisor and call the appropriate emergency responders
- Make a list of all persons who have touched the package and provide the information to the emergency response team upon arrival
- After the incident is resolved the agency mail supervisors should report it to SMS

# Prevention

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## **Ways to limit physical exposure to mailings containing biological hazards materials:**

- ❖ Screen all mail
- ❖ Know how to recognize suspicious mail
- ❖ Follow the procedures for suspicious items
- ❖ Do not open mail in an area where other personnel are present
- ❖ Keep mail away from your face when opening
- ❖ Wear appropriate protective gloves and mask if available
- ❖ Use universal blood borne pathogen precautions as developed by your agency



# Improvised Explosive Devices

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An IED is a device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract.

IEDs come in all shapes and sizes. They can be placed in letters, packages, briefcases, vehicles, anywhere, just use your imagination.

# Technology

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Technology to Build a Bomb is Easy to Obtain:

- Experience
- Reference Materials:
  - ❖ Field Manuals and Tech Manuals are Available
  - ❖ Published Commercial Literature
  - ❖ Video Tapes
  - ❖ World Wide Web



# **Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)**

# Mail Bombs Characteristics

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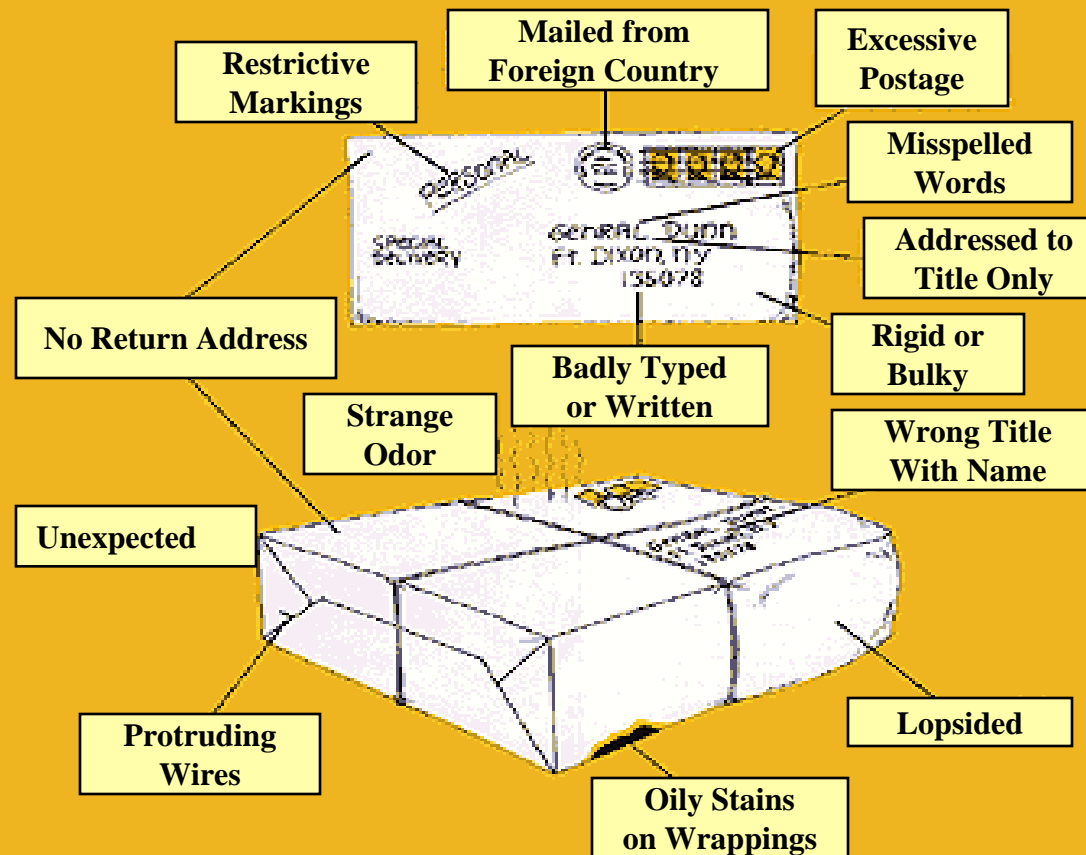
- ❖ Letters or packages that are unusual in weight, lopsided, oddly shaped, or oddly sealed
- ❖ You may hear a sloshing sound
- ❖ Feels rigid, springy, or under pressure
- ❖ From an unknown sender, addressee does not normally receive personal mail at office
- ❖ Contents of envelope do not resemble expected contents
- ❖ Strange odor (i.e. smell of almonds, marzipan or any other strange smell)

# Mail Bombs Characteristics

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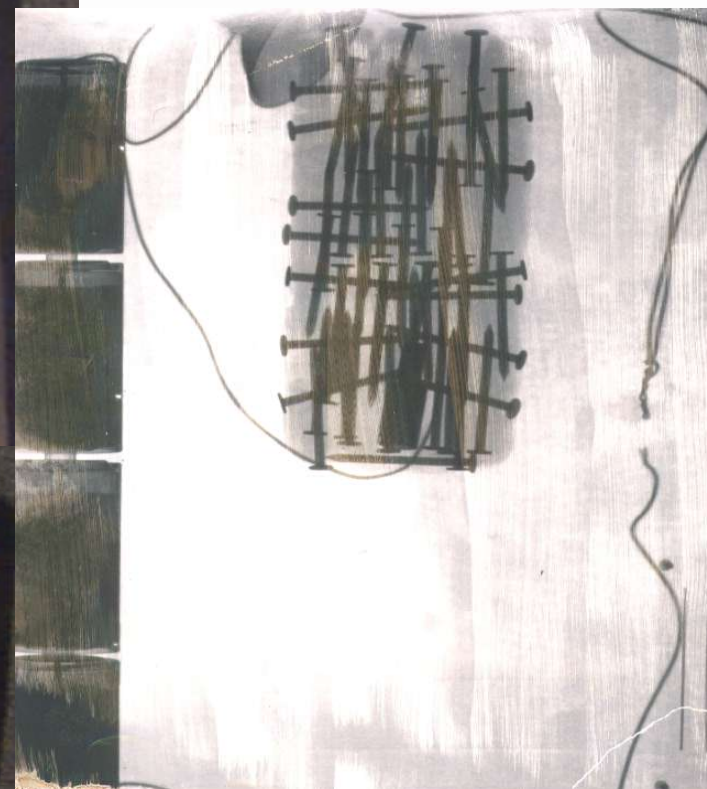
- ❖ Protruding wires, strings, tape, etc.
- ❖ Wrapping exhibiting previous use, such as having traces of glue, mailing labels, return addresses, or tape
- ❖ Unusual sound or noise (ticking or buzzing)
- ❖ Item was not delivered by a known carrier
- ❖ Wrapped in string
- ❖ A letter or package arriving before or after a phone call from an unknown caller

# LETTER AND PACKAGE BOMB INDICATORS





# Package Bomb



# Effects of an Explosion

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- ❖ Blast over pressure (a crushing action on vital components of the body; eardrums are the most vulnerable)
- ❖ Falling structural material
- ❖ Flying debris (especially glass)
- ❖ Bomb fragments
- ❖ Burns from incendiary devices or fires
- ❖ Inhalation of toxic fumes resulting from fires



# What to do if you Receive a Suspicious Letter or Parcel (Bomb-IED)

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- ❖ Do not touch it
- ❖ Do not allow anyone else to touch it
- ❖ Activate the building's evacuation plan
- ❖ Leave doors and windows open during evacuation
- ❖ Keep people away from the area
- ❖ Notify your supervisor and call the appropriate emergency responders
- ❖ Do not handle suspicious objects or carry outside
- ❖ Do not place the item in water
- ❖ After the incident is resolved, the agency mail supervisor should report it to SMS

# Prevention

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- ❖ The best method to detect explosive devices is to use an X-ray machine to screen all mail
- ❖ Know how to recognize suspicious mail
- ❖ Follow the procedures for suspicious items

# **SMS and Agency Roles in the Commonwealth's Mail Security Program**

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- ❖ Perform a vulnerability assessment to determine if your organization or a particular employee is a potential target.
- ❖ Appoint a Mail Center Security Coordinator and an alternate to be assigned responsibility for and to ensure compliance with the developed plan
- ❖ Established direct lines of notification and communication among the Mail Center Security Coordinator, management and security office (Virginia Capitol, Henrico, Chesterfield and Richmond Police Departments)

# **SMS and Agency Roles in the Commonwealth's Mail Security Program**

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- ❖ Develop specific screening and inspection procedures for all incoming mail or package deliveries and train employees in those procedures
- ❖ Develop specific mail center handling techniques and procedures for items identified through screening as suspicious and dangerous
- ❖ Develop verification procedures for confirming the contents of suspicious packages encountered through the screening process

# **SMS and Agency Roles in the Commonwealth's Mail Security Program**

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- ❖ Designate an isolation area for use with suspicious packages
- ❖ Establish a safety zone around the isolation area
- ❖ Construct a holding area for use with suspicious packages
- ❖ Conduct training sessions for mail center, security and management personnel to validate the practicality of all phases of the mail bomb screening program
- ❖ Conduct unannounced tests for mail center personnel

# Quick Reference Items

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- ❖ Commonwealth of Virginia Mail Security Guide
- ❖ SMS Mail Center Emergency Contact Sheet (For agencies located in and around the VA Capitol Square)
- ❖ SMS Mail Center Emergency Contact Sheet (For agencies located outside the VA Capitol Square area)
- ❖ SMS Suspicious Mail Poster
- ❖ USPS Suspicious Mail Poster (post in large mail rooms)

**All items are available for download at  
<http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov/mailsecurity.aspx>**